

MONTAGUE PUBLIC LIBRARIES TRUSTEES MEETING AGENDA

Monday, December 18th, 2023 at 6:00PM

Via zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81576433584?pwd=Y1E3R1p5SzZsVUpiN0pieE1QdEF6QT09>

Meeting ID: 815 7643 3584

Passcode: 1234

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment Period: Please limit comments to two minutes

REGULAR BUSINESS *(Please read all handouts prior to meeting. Meeting time will be for edits and questions only.)*

3. Approval of minutes from 11/27/23
4. Director's report

DISCUSSION TOPICS

5. Public forum debrief
6. Items not anticipated within 48 hours of meeting. Votes may be taken
7. Next meeting date, agenda suggestions
8. Adjourn

December 2023

1. On 12/4, I gave a presentation to the Selectboard on the state library construction grant. They approved our "Comprehensive Service Plan," which states that the Montague Libraries do not plan to change hours or services that are available at the Millers or Montague Center Branches even if we do pass a construction project.

The Selectboard also approved my application for ALA's Accessibility grant and Anglela's LSTA letter of intent, which is focused on supporting the mental health of tweens and teens in the community. Both the grant and the LOI were submitted last week. I should hear back about the ALA grant in early February and Angela will submit the full LSTA grant application in April.

2. Work should begin on the Montague Center roof shortly and the same roofers will be re-shingling the roof over the Carnegie staff entrance. Unfortunately, the roofers haven't given me or Walter Ramsey precise start/finish dates.
3. After last weekend's rain, a lot of water seeped into the Carnegie's basement through the well in the handicap ramp. Though it's probably too late to deal with this issue this winter, it ought to be prioritized for the spring. I'll reach out to the DPW about getting the dirt in the well cleared after it thaws.
4. It has also come to my attention that the carpet in the food pantry part of Millers is getting a little gross from pantry activity. Given that we'll be looking into how Millers might be re-configured this spring/summer that may also be a good time to consider removing and replacing the carpet, potentially with another flooring type. There's \$4,400 in the libraries' maintenance line that could be spent on this.
5. I reached out to Lynne Weintraub, who runs ESOL services at the Jones Library in Amherst about services to our Spanish-speaking community. She wrote me a super-comprehensive email back with lots of great suggestions. I plan to go over her ideas with Mary and Lili of MCSM on 12/19. Serving the community effectively will require multi-agency collaboration and/or substantial grant funding. That said, I'm hopeful that some of the ideas can be scaled and piloted in the coming year.
6. The personnel committee will meet in January to discuss the possibility of updating/transforming the technician position at the Carnegie Library. I've reached out to and received helpful feedback from similarly-sized towns about their staffing models.
7. We had 12-14 attendees at our 12/12 zoom forum and 32 or 34 attendees at the 12/13 in-person forum. Both presentations went well. No participants argued that we don't need to make any improvements to the library.

One person advocated that the senior center needs to be combined with the library project. To this suggestion, I offered that the MBLC grant funds cannot be used for a joint project *unless* there is a clear distinction between the library side of the building and the senior center portion, such as a breezeway or hallway. MBLC funds can only be used to pay for the library portion of such a project.

In a follow-up conversation with Roberta (head of the COA), she noted that there hadn't been any appetite in the community just 6-7 years ago for the idea of building a new senior center. She did express that having a senior center next to a library is a great idea and suggested that, if we decide to build a new library, we might ask our architect to consider the possibility of saving space on 38 Ave A for a second building to be built down the road.

Another person advocated, at both forums, that any new library be built on the Farren site. I wish we had thought to be more transparent at the beginning of this project about our site selection process. While I do think that there should be a community space constructed at the Farren site—where MPL would gladly facilitate programming and outreach—to take the library from the residents of Turners Falls would be a disservice. I admittedly lost sleep over how firmly I advocated for that point, but I'm also loath to imply that other sites are up for consideration at this point. It could be a non-issue. Others pointed out that no one else in attendance seemed to agree that the Farren would be a superior site to 38 Avenue A.

Many people are rightfully concerned about what might happen to the Carnegie building, should a new building be constructed. Walter noted that it would be a good idea to bring that matter to the Selectboard as they're the ones who would put the building up for sale with restrictions ensuring that the building would not be torn down or otherwise aesthetically compromised.

Finally, when discussing what makes a building feel like Turners Falls/Great Falls, Vicki wisely suggested that such a building would look and feel like the Great Hall that we were currently inhabiting. Another woman mentioned incorporating the community's indigenous history, its industrial history, and the loveliness of the river into a design. (The last point reminded me of the river theme of Athol's children's room) She also made other good comments that I'm forgetting now but hope someone else committed to memory.

8. Yes, I am waiting for a quote for how much it would cost to move the Carnegie 0.4 miles down the road (!!!)